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## NEUROLOGICAL PICTURE .....

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### Diagnosis at the tip of the tongue

A 21 year old woman presented with three episodes of transient loss of consciousness and generalised clonic limb jerking. Post-ictal neurological examination was normal, but there was a tongue bite with laceration on the lateral side, highly suggestive for epilepsy. Magnetic resonance imaging of the brain (performed in the diagnostic investigation for seizures) also demonstrated the classical lateral tongue bite.

Transient loss of consciousness accompanied by limb jerking can occur both in generalised epileptic seizures and in syncope.<sup>1</sup> Urinary incontinence is not a helpful distinguishing feature, as this occurs in 17% of generalised seizures and in 26% of syncopal events.<sup>2–3</sup> The presence of tongue bite strongly suggests epilepsy (occurs in up to 41% of generalised tonic clonic seizures), although it may occasionally occur in syncope (2–6%). The site of the laceration should be noted, as it is typically lateral in epilepsy, but at the tip of the tongue in syncope.<sup>3</sup>

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**Figure 1** Magnetic resonance imaging of the brain of a 21 year old woman (performed in the diagnostic investigations for seizures). This T2 weighted axial image shows the classical lateral tongue bite.